

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1951.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the June quarter, 1951, with figures for March quarter, 1951, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1698 (1612); Toowoomba, 1705 (1623); Rockhampton, 1739 (1631); Townsville, 1752 (1651); Bundaberg, 1706 (1607); and Warwick, 1696 (1591).

The rise in prices in Brisbane in the June quarter of 1951 (as measured by the "C" Series Index Number) was 5.3 per cent., which was the greatest rise ever recorded in one quarter, and substantially exceeded the record set by 4.3 per cent. increases in each of the two preceding quarters. Amongst the main sections of the index, however, only clothing and footwear showed a record increase. The rise of 9.7 per cent. in these items was more than twice as high as usual. It may be noted, however, that clothing items always show a large price movement in the second quarter of the year owing to the arrival of new stocks of winter goods, and the second quarter of 1949 showed a rise of 7.7 per cent., which approached that of the most recent quarter. The increase in food and grocery prices in the second quarter of 1951 was 5.0 per cent., which although large had been exceeded in three other quarters since the beginning of 1948. The increase in the prices of miscellaneous items was only 1.1 per cent., following a large rise of 8.3 per cent. in the previous quarter, when fares, gas, and electricity all moved upward.

The latest increase brought the total rise in the "C" Series Index for the twelve months ended June, 1951, to 17.4 per cent., compared with 8.1 per cent. for the corresponding period twelve months earlier.

The price rise in Brisbane in the June quarter of 1951 was somewhat less than in four of the other five cities in which prices are collected, the exception being Toowoomba, where the rise was 5.1 per cent. The greatest increase in food and grocery prices during the quarter was in Warwick (7.9 per cent.), while Bundaberg and Rockhampton showed the greatest increases in clothing and footwear prices (12.5 and 12.3 per cent. respectively).

The indexes show the following increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1951.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.		From June Quarter, 1950.		From March Quarter, 1951.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	96.8	17.4	5.3		
Toowoomba	100.4	17.2	5.1		
Rockhampton	102.0	19.0	6.6		
Townsville	92.1	16.3	6.1		
Bundaberg	102.9	18.7	6.2		
Warwick	106.3	18.4	6.6		

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1951.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1951.
Brisbane ..	%	%	%	%	%	%
Toowoomba ..	97.4	5.0	222.4	9.7	63.2	1.1
Rockhampton ..	111.5	5.0	216.4	9.1	59.2	1.0
Townsville ..	101.2	4.4	219.1	12.3	68.5	4.6
Bundaberg ..	87.1	5.1	221.9	11.0	68.7	2.7
Warwick ..	96.3	4.2	226.0	12.5	63.5	2.4
	109.5	7.9	220.0	10.0	60.0	1.8

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, the increases recorded in food prices (ranging from 4.2 per cent. in Bundaberg to 7.9 per cent. in Warwick) were considerably higher than in the previous quarter. The principal rises were in the prices of milk, potatoes, jam, eggs, onions, and meat.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary in Bundaberg and Warwick, while increases in the other four cities varied from 0.3 per cent. in Toowoomba to 1.4 per cent. in Townsville.

Clothing and Footwear.

Increases in the clothing and footwear index numbers during the recent quarter were the highest on record. The previous highest quarterly increase occurred in June quarter, 1949. Chief causes of the increases were the higher prices of winter seasonal items and footwear.

Miscellaneous Items.

The comparatively small rise of 1.1 per cent. in miscellaneous items in Brisbane was the smallest quarterly increase recorded in the past year. The increase was due, chiefly, to higher prices of blankets.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required, in June quarter, 1951, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	1	1	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	19	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	2	
Rockhampton	1	0	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	18	2 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	2	1	1	0
Townsville	1	0	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	18	10 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	8
Bundaberg ..	1	0	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	15	6		1	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Warwick ..	19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	16	9 $\frac{1}{4}$		19	9		1	0	8

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased during the quarter in four of the provincial cities for which data are collected. A decrease of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the £ occurred in Toowoomba.

Prices of food and groceries in Toowoomba retained the same relativity to Brisbane as in the previous quarter, while the excess over Brisbane prices was reduced in Rockhampton and Bundaberg but increased slightly in Townsville. The largest movement recorded since March quarter was in Warwick, where food costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 0s. 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., or 7d. more than in the previous quarter.

In comparison with Brisbane, relative prices of clothing and footwear decreased in Toowoomba but increased in the other four provincial cities. The greatest relative change was in Bundaberg, where clothing and footwear, which was $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ cheaper than in Brisbane during the March quarter of 1951, was 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ dearer in the June quarter.

Prices of miscellaneous items in the provincial cities covered by the survey remained dearer than in Brisbane. Largest variation recorded since the previous quarter was in Rockhampton, where miscellaneous items costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 1s. od., compared with £1 0s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during the first quarter of the year. This variation was due mainly to the fact that Rockhampton electricity and gas charges were increased while Brisbane charges remained unchanged. Charges for electricity in Townsville and gas in Bundaberg were also increased during the quarter.

State Basic Wage Rates in Various Cities.

The first column of the following table shows, for the June quarter of 1951, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for Brisbane, for four of the other principal cities of Queensland for which figures are available, and for the other five capital cities of Australia. The next two columns show the basic wage rates, for males and females, as prescribed by the appropriate State industrial authorities, for each city at the middle of the June quarter, 1951. These are followed by columns showing the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of real purchasing power equivalent to that provided by the respective State basic wages in each of the cities shown. The differences between these amounts and the actual State basic wage rates for Brisbane, as shown in the final columns, show the margin of advantage in purchasing power enjoyed by Brisbane basic wage earners over basic wage earners in each of the other cities. Minus (-) figures in the last columns indicate that the local basic wage in a particular city provided a higher level of real purchasing power than the Brisbane basic wage had in Brisbane.

Comparison of Purchasing Powers of Basic Wages of State Industrial Authorities,June Quarter, 1951.

City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 2nd Qtr., 1951.	Basic Wage at 15.5.51.		Equivalent of Local Basic Wage at Brisbane Prices.		Extra Purchasing Power of Brisbane Basic Wage.							
		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1698	8	6	0	5	10	0	8	6	0	5	10	0
Toowoomba	1705	8	6	0	5	10	0	8	5	4	5	9	7
Rockhampton	1739	8	6	0	5	10	0	8	2	1	5	7	5
Townsville	1752	8	16	0	5	15	0	8	10	7	5	11	5
Bundaberg	1706	8	6	0	5	10	0	8	5	3	5	9	6
Sydney ..	1875	9	0	0	6	15	0	8	3	0	6	2	3
Melbourne	1839	8	17	0 ^a	6	13	0 ^a	8	3	5	6	2	10
Adelaide ..	1790	8	11	0	6	8	0	8	2	3	6	1	5
Perth ..	1827	9	4	3	5	4	1	8	11	3	4	16	9
Hobart ..	1811	8	13	0 ^a	6	10	0 ^a	8	2	2	6	1	11
											3	10	-11 11

^a No State wage is declared. As the Commonwealth rate is followed to a large extent, Commonwealth rates are shown.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the June quarter, 1951, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st August, 1951. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown in the next table, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, September Quarter, 1951.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.			Date of Operation.
	Males. ^a	Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.	Females.			
Brisbane ..	8 15 0	9 0	8 15 0	5 16 0			30.7.51
Sydney ..	9 13 0	13 0	9 13 0	7 4 6			1.8.51
Melbourne ..	9 9 0	12 0	(9 9 0)	a			(1.8.51) ^b
Adelaide ..	9 4 0	13 0	9 4 0	6 18 0			1.8.51
Perth ..	9 8 0	12 0	9 16 8	5 11 1			23.7.51
Hobart ..	9 7 0	14 0	(9 7 0)	a			(1.8.51) ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b No State wage declared, but rate shown is that of Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

13th August, 1951.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.
Brisbane	863	1079	1585	1446	1482	1546	1612	1698
Toowoomba	851	1092	1597	1455	1496	1562	1623	1705
Rockhampton	861	1084	1611	1461	1497	1577	1631	1739
Townsville	912	1119	1632	1506	1528	1595	1651	1752
Bundaberg	841	1059	1583	1437	1471	1548	1607	1706
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	1082	1591	1451	1487	1553	1616	1706
Warwick	822	1073	1574	1432	1474	1533	1591	1696

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.
Brisbane	856	971	1581	1421	1473	1551	1610	1690
Toowoomba	814	1010	1606	1441	1486	1574	1640	1722
Rockhampton	895	1012	1678	1462	1529	1658	1725	1801
Townsville	955	1057	1673	1537	1568	1635	1700	1787
Bundaberg	903	1027	1658	1464	1517	1639	1701	1773
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	864	984	1598	1435	1485	1568	1629	1709
Warwick	846	1000	1621	1444	1491	1577	1642	1772

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended June, 1951.	Quarter Ended -				
				June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.
Brisbane	829	1454	2429	2197	2251	2355	2436	2673
Toowoomba	829	1429	2402	2195	2244	2338	2404	2623
Rockhampton	845	1477	2425	2225	2256	2347	2401	2696
Townsville	840	1457	2445	2221	2260	2379	2437	2704
Bundaberg	839	1447	2452	2239	2264	2376	2431	2735
Weighted Average								
Five Towns	831	1454	2429	2202	2252	2356	2451	2675
Warwick	825	1441	2395	2175	2229	2312	2400	2640